

Implementing Vocabulary Journals through Digital Narrative Text for EFL Secondary Students in Learning General Vocabulary

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ABSTRACT

Four fundamental language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing are important skills for EFL secondary school students to develop it. Learning English requires fundamental knowledge of vocabulary since it influences these abilities greatly. However, vocabulary instruction is often overlooked in traditional language learning strategies. On the other hand, the use of digital narrative texts, such as videos, provides a modern approach to facilitating students in general vocabulary learning. This study explores the integration of vocabulary journals with digital narrative texts to enhance vocabulary acquisition among EFL secondary students specifically in junior high school students. This study used action research and involved 25 students from a junior high school in Karawang. Data collection methods included vocabulary journal logs, observations, interviews, and reflective journals. The findings revealed that vocabulary journals significantly assist students in understanding and retaining new vocabulary, enhancing overall language comprehension. Students expressed positive attitudes towards this method, highlighting its engaging and interactive learning strategy. This study concludes that combining vocabulary journals with digital narrative texts effectively supports vocabulary acquisition, making learning more enjoyable and impactful. This approach fosters deeper understanding and long-term retention of vocabulary, improving students' language skills and academic performance. The findings suggest that this innovative strategy could be beneficial in educational settings.

Key words: Vocabulary Journals; Digital Narrative Text; General Vocabulary.

INTRODUCTION

As English language learners, junior high school students must develop four language skills. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are among the skills required. These language skills are incorporated into the teaching and learning

process. Vocabulary significantly influences those skills. Learning vocabulary is a complex process that requires the student to understand both the form and variety of meanings of a given lexical word. Furthermore, vocabulary development is the first step toward learning English. It is vital for all EFL students to increase their vocabulary. Junior high school students should also prioritize the acquisition of linguistic knowledge and vocabulary because it is necessary for effective communication. Furthermore, memorizing general vocabulary wordlists can assist in this process by providing common vocabulary items that appear frequently in various texts (Nation, 2001). Learning general vocabulary is an important part of the language development process for high school students. Students can better understand and communicate their thoughts when they have a large vocabulary.

In current era of technology, digital narrative texts in the form of video have been shown useful as a learning tool to help students in the learning process. The ability to read and comprehend digital narrative texts provides significant benefits to students, including the development of language abilities. As (Sari & Aminatun, 2021) stated that videos are potential educational tools that facilitate learners' acquisition of vocabulary. Students have the belief that watching English movies or videos, especially those with subtitles, is beneficial for their English language acquisition. On the other hand, students frequently struggle to understand vocabulary used in digital narrative texts. Aside from that, the education curriculum utilized in Indonesia still focuses on language acquisition through a genre-based approach and does not include vocabulary as a focus learning subject. Vocabulary is not specifically taught while teaching English in the classroom. As a result, students have a limited vocabulary, affecting their language skills. Furthermore, several EFL/ESL schools emphasize teacher-centered learning. During these sessions, the teacher takes on the majority of the engagement. For example, the teacher may give hard explanations, drill repeatedly, ask the majority of the questions, and complain about how the students perform (Yanto, 2017; Jerry, 2009). Students become bored while learning in the classroom using conventional methods of instruction.

Regarding the previously mentioned issue, it is necessary to come up with an engaging instructional strategy to address the students' lack of vocabulary knowledge and involve them in class activities. Vocabulary journals are one type of learning procedure that allows teachers and students to engage in more interactive teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Vocabulary journals are lists of terms related to a given topic or activity described in the form of a journal or note. Journal vocabulary can assist pupils learn language related to the topic being studied. Furthermore, vocabulary diaries might help pupils increase their knowledge of broad vocabulary. Students might use vocabulary journals to record difficult or unknown terms they encounter while reading. "This strategy requires students to understand not only the translation of words, but also their meaning and context" (Antonacci, & O'Callaghan, 2012; Bone, 2000). The journal can also help students investigate the meaning of new phrases and connect them to the primary definitions.

The aim of this present study is to identify the implementation of vocabulary journals to help EFL secondary students in general vocabulary learning of digital narrative text. This study also seeks to find how the EFL secondary students' responses about these activities. Furthermore, this present study will employ action research for the designs involving observations, interviews and self-reflective journals as data collecting. The primary goal of using this method is to obtain a thorough understanding of the applying vocabulary journals to engage students in acquiring general vocabulary through digital narrative text. In addition, the results from this study can provide insights to EFL secondary school teachers to consider English learning activities that will implementing in the classroom to engaging students. As a result, this study has the potential to advance our understanding of how vocabulary journaling as an instructional procedure can help students develop their vocabulary. This study was guided by the following two research questions in order to fill in this gap: (1) How does vocabulary journals facilitate secondary school students in learn general vocabulary of digital narrative text?; (2) What are the students' responses to these activities?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Related Study

According to Turnuk (2018), "keeping vocabulary journals not only improves vocabulary acquisition and continuation, but also reading comprehension and writing creation, which increases students' success rates." Vocabulary journals help students learn target words effectively when done correctly, but copying from peers is not beneficial. Nurdini & Marlina (2018) state that vocabulary journals allow students to develop vocabulary knowledge by recording words, providing detailed definitions. Students can include meanings, definitions, parts of speech, synonyms/antonyms, and use words in phrases. Drawing pictures as visual aids makes the information more memorable. Chong Wan Ting & Li Li, K. (2019) found that students enjoyed creating drawings of words, showing that vocabulary journals can enhance creativity. Previous research that conducted by Yanto, Saefullah, & Kwary (2020) demonstrated that vocabulary logs make texts more comprehensible and memorable that could engage students in comprehend the text more deeply. On the other hand, Purwati (2022) noted that this strategy motivates students to learn vocabulary, especially in narrative texts. Vocabulary journals that combined with narrative texts and tools like concordances and monolingual online dictionaries, effectively increase productive vocabulary Chubaryan et al., (2023).

Vocabulary Journals as an Instructional Procedure of Learning

In vocabulary learning, students need to understand various aspects such as form, meaning, and use (Nation, 2001). Vocabulary journals appear as an effective strategy to help students explore word meanings encountered during reading. These journals differ from regular notebooks as they allow students to engage with words

and ideas in their own language (Popp, 1997). This strategy helps students understand not only translations but also meanings and contexts. Students select challenging or unique terms from readings and use their journals to explore meanings, connect with experiences, and provide detailed definitions, aligning with (Pritchard, A. 2017; Vygotsky, 1978) emphasis on cognitive effort and social context in learning. The implementation steps of vocabulary journals in learning vocabulary from Antonacci and O'Callaghan (2012) are: (1) Introduce Vocabulary Journals, explaining their purpose and how to identify words for learning; (2) Demonstrate word selection through read-aloud activities; (3) Use think-alouds to show how to derive word meanings; (4) Record ideas to investigate definitions, using word maps and graphic organizers; (5) Encourage consistent use and sharing of journals in various reading contexts; (6) Use journals as a resource, integrating them into learning to understand new words, spellings, concepts, and ideas.

Digital Narrative Text (video) as Learning Media

Audiovisual input for teaching and learning in the classroom can be appropriate for learning sources. As the development of digital technology nowadays around young people, the development of video not just as an entertainment but also as the learning sources that integrated in technology. (Sari & Aminatun, 2021) stated, video are strong learning tools that can help learners gain word knowledge. It may be concluded that students believe that watching English movies or video, particularly those with subtitles, will help them learn English. Aside from that, most students say that viewing English movies helps them learn new terminology and how to utilize it. Moreover, according to a study conducted by Esen, Betül, and Elif (2018), they investigated the use of films with subtitles in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Their study revealed that incorporating subtitles in the learner's mother tongue had a beneficial impact on both comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.

Conceptualizing General English Vocabulary

There are many kinds of vocabulary as a (Nation, 2001) state four forms of vocabulary for usage in another language are high frequency words, academic terms, technical words, and low-frequency words. General vocabulary, often known as high-frequency vocabulary, is vocabulary that appears frequently in various types of texts and everyday language. It is expected to contain the majority of the words and phrases students learn in a general English course at school. Furthermore, general vocabulary wordlists might help with this process by giving common vocabulary items that appear frequently in various literature (Beglar and Hunt 2005; Carter 2012). According to (Nation, 2001), general vocabulary consists of normally set at 2000 words families. This is the number of word families in the original General Service List (GSL), which serves as the foundation for the Academic Word List (AWL), which is still the most often used list of academic words. Most of spoken and written English content is based on general vocabulary. For example, the top ten words in English account for around 25% of all terms used in writing

and speaking, the top 100 words account for 50%, the top 1000 words account for around 70%, and the top 2000 words account for around 80%.

METHOD

Design and Samples

This study employs action research as the foundation for developing research strategies and involved twenty-five students in eight junior high school grades with the age range of 14 to 15 years old. The determination of the research depends on the objective of the study. Action research from the Macro Stages of AR was adapted from Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2014). It has the cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting that aims to eventually bring about good improvements in teaching methods and student performance. However, this study employs micro stages of AR that have been adapted from Ramdani, J. M., Yanto, E. S., Sri, M., & Djunaedi, R. (2022). These micro stages involve a cyclical process consisting of four stages: (1) develop a plan of action; stage (2) act to implement the plan; stage (3) observe the effects of action in the context; stage (4) interpret the result.

Stages of AR

Stages	Activities
Stage 1: Develop a Plan of Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying problem or issue that will address in the research 2. Doing a literature review to gain any specific information about the problem/issue 3. Deciding the research questions 4. Setting clear goals about the research 5. Making stages of instructional procedure for applying vocabulary journals in the class 6. Preparing the tools for the data collection 7. Making lesson plan for teaching-learning activity
Stage 2: Act to Implement the Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementing the plan actions or interventions based on the lesson plan. 2. Showing and guiding how to use vocabulary journals as learning strategy 3. Facilitating the students during teaching-learning activity.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Helping students to reflect what they have learned during this activity 5. Inviting students to complete self-reflective journal that provided 6. Asking them to participate in an interview.
Stage 3: Observe the Effects of Action in the Context	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collecting and sorting the data during the implementation phase and observe it. 2. Analyzing obtained data by coding and identifying qualitative themes. The data collected should be relevant to the research questions and objectives of the study.
Stage 4: Interpret the result	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examining the data, answering research questions and making sense of the findings. 2. Reflecting on the impact and the limitation of the study based on the identified issue or problem.

Instrument and Procedure

The researcher carried out some instrument in order to collect data about the responses of students to the use of Vocabulary Journals as a learning strategy, such as having the students a vocabulary journal template that was adapted from Nurdini, H., & Marlina, L. (2018) is to see how the students' process of selecting new terms/vocabulary they chose it was tracked using a vocabulary journal. The students were identified the meaning, synonym, anonym, word classes, and context of sentences about the word they chose based on their prior knowledge of the subject matter. Furthermore, this study also do observation as a way to collect information that was adapted from (Fitri et al., 2019). Observational methods are valuable for researchers because they allow them to evaluate nonverbal expressions of feelings, determine who is engaging with whom, comprehend how participants communicate with one another, and measure how much time is spent on particular activities. Observation that used in this study by video record to see the teaching learning process in the classroom. On the other side, to see how the students' responses during teaching-learning activity by involving interview section and having the students' reflective journals in which indicated some questions for the students to answer.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2022) six phases of thematic analysis. The following steps are outlined: (1) Familiarizing with the data: The researcher thoroughly examines and reexamines the students' interview transcripts, reflective journals, and vocabulary journal log activities; (2) Coding: The researcher engages in the process of creating conceptual and systematic data by eliminating extraneous content from student interview and reflective journals; (3) Identifying themes: The researcher discovered patterns within the data and organized them into groups according to the research questions and objectives of the study; (4) Review themes: The researcher meticulously examined and evaluated all the data to confirm its relevance to the research themes and that the responses were derived from the experiences and perspectives of the students; (5) The researcher carried out the task of defining and labeling the themes by assigning names to all the data that contribute to each theme and identifying the themes that are relevant to the issue. (6) Writing up: The researcher completes the data, then reports, explains in detail, and provides evidence to support the research report.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the selective data analysis, the two themes that were identified were (1) The Procedure of Vocabulary Journals in Facilitating Students Learning General Vocabulary with Digital Narrative Text and (2) The Student Voices of Efficacy Vocabulary Journals in Learning General Vocabulary with Digital Narrative Text; These two themes address the research question “How does vocabulary journals facilitate secondary school students in learning general vocabulary of digital narrative text? and What are the students’ responses to these activities?” in this research.

The Procedure of Vocabulary Journals in Facilitating Students' Learning General Vocabulary with Digital Narrative Text

The researcher in this study served as a pre-service teacher and used certain vocabulary journal-based teaching strategies to help the students in learning general vocabulary. In this study, the students view short story as digital narrative text and complete vocabulary journals template in-view activities. Part of the introduction to learning about general vocabulary in the narrative text was viewing short videos, understanding how to choose a word from the text, using think-aloud methodology to generate meaning from the words, and recording the thoughts in vocabulary journals. After that, the teacher show the students how to identified the characteristics of narrative text such as recognizing generic structure, social function, and linguistic feature that helps them recognize the vocabulary in this course.

As part of their collaborative learning project, the students had the chance to view video about fabel and identify the intriguing words they did not know in order to

participate in classroom learning activities. The participants were boosted to engage during their viewing session. Students were instructed to participate in general vocabulary learning by using vocabulary journals. Each lesson ran for an hour and ten minutes, respectively, and we met twice a week. Originally, building knowledge in the field was first done to did such tasks in the first meeting sessions, and then the students began learning general vocabulary with vocabulary journals and digital narrative text.

Particularly when they watched short stories to choose the words they thought were interesting and significant for them to learn, vocabulary journals with the aim of exploring words in narrative texts, familiarizing students with how to build the meaning of the words, word class, sentence context, synonyms, antonyms, and draw a picture to visualize the words, generally help the students. All told, students are involved in the following learning exercises. Using vocabulary journals in learning general vocabulary with digital narrative text was meant to assist students in becoming more conscious of the ways to improve their vocabulary knowledge, grasp the text, and engage in cooperative tasks. The students were involved all through the vocabulary journals process in helping students acquire general vocabulary via digital narrative text. In general, the teacher emphasized the need to utilize vocabulary journals with digital texts to assist students in acquiring general vocabulary. Creating vocabulary journals as a learning tool can boost students' mastery of vocabulary.

The Student Voices of Efficacy Vocabulary Journals in Learning General Vocabulary with Digital Narrative Text

According to the interview data analysis, the students mostly recognized the benefits of using vocabulary journals to learn general vocabulary through the use of digital narrative text. The majority of students show a positive attitude towards utilizing a vocabulary journal as a method to assist them in acquiring general vocabulary frequently encountered in narrative texts. The following are a few of their viewpoints:

“Vocabulary journals really help me to learn vocabulary. Usually, when I look up words that I don't know, I will search for them from Google Translate, but if I use vocabulary journals, it is easier for me to use them. Furthermore, I'm more interested in learning vocabulary, if you can rate it 9/10 because using vocabulary journals is exciting and fun for me.” (SN, May 2024).

“Yes, vocabulary journals really help me to learn vocabulary. Because vocabulary journals are easy to understand and not complicated to use, we can understand them quickly. I am more interested in learning vocabulary, and even though I can not speak English, I understand how to use vocabulary journals.” (DG, May 2024)

Students' interviews show that vocabulary journals assist them in learning general English vocabulary. This strategy helps students learn meaningful words for

themselves and their classmates. They also claimed outstanding results from this strategy. Students learned new words on their own to use in various contexts. This strategy could make learning English more enjoyable for students. However, vocabulary journals could help students to comprehend the text since it includes columns for synonyms and antonyms, word classes, sentence usage, and picture visualization. Several students expressed positive opinions about the benefits of using vocabulary journals as a learning tool in English language learning to comprehend the text. Some of their responses are shown below:

“Vocabulary journals help me to comprehend the text because there are usually many texts that use words that are difficult to understand. But I can do it quickly. Usually, people find it difficult to learn new things; they have to repeat it over and over again until they can, but I feel like using these vocabulary journals, I can immediately understand. In addition, the advantages of vocabulary journals are that there is a picture column because I really like drawing pictures, there is a word class so I know what words include verbs/nouns/adjectives/adverbs, and there are synonyms that help me know the similarities of words.” (SN, May 2024).

“It really helps, it really helps to improve reading and comprehension skills. It's like before, I only had a few basic words that I knew, but when I learned to use vocabulary journals, it got better because it is easier to understand synonyms and antonyms and know the meaning of the vocabulary.” (PHM, May 2024).

Based on the interview results, the vocabulary journals helps students understand what they are reading because a few texts use words that students who only know a few basic English words might not know. They achieve success in improving their English vocabulary after using this vocabulary journal. Using vocabulary journals, students can write down and learn new words they come across while reading English texts. Furthermore, the finding also shows that applying this vocabulary journal with digital narrative text such as videos has a positive attitude from the students. Some of the students' responses from the self-reflective journal to this include the following below:

“This learning is very fun. Especially when learning using a laptop. It's like learning in a movie theater. When the projector is turned on in the room, and while listening to the teacher explain the material, the learning activities feel very fun.” (MA, May 2024).

“I have learned a lot of vocabulary from the vocabulary journal, which makes it easier for me to learn English words that I don't know. One of them is English vocabulary, such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. My English has improved from not knowing English at all to knowing it because of the videos or stories of animals. Previously, I had never watched the video on a projector via YouTube. The English lesson this time was not boring because a projector was provided to look for vocabulary from the

digital dictionary that I did not know. In addition, the English lesson this time was very fun because I could share English learning with my friends.” (MRH, May 2024).

This finding demonstrates a favorable attitude towards this learning strategy, as the study integrated the use of a vocabulary diary with digital narrative text, which represents an innovative method for classroom learning activities. This combination has the potential to offer students an engaging learning experience. Integrating digital technology, such as movies, projectors, and digital dictionaries, into English classrooms has been demonstrated to enhance students' motivation. Utilizing these digital resources enhances the interactivity and engagement of the learning experience. By utilizing vocabulary journals in combination with digital narrative texts, students can enhance their vocabulary proficiency while also gaining a more pleasurable and significant learning encounter. This will undoubtedly motivate students to participate more actively in the learning process and enhance their comprehension of the text. The results demonstrate that integrating instructional procedures with the incorporation of digital technology can be a successful technique in enhancing students' academic achievements, particularly in the context of English language acquisition.

From the findings, the researcher highlighted some important points. First, vocabulary journals could facilitate the students in learning general vocabulary through digital narrative text. This supports the idea that vocabulary learning involves "its form (spoken, written, and component affixes and stem), its meaning (underlying concept, particular instantiations, and associations), and its use (collocations, grammatical patterns and constraints on its use)" (Nation 2001, p. 82). Writing definitions, word class, sample sentences, synonyms, antonyms, and pictures in vocabulary journals help students learn general vocabulary. Actively learning new terms helps students understand them. This improves comprehension and helps children remember words. Writing the definition, recognizing the word's part of speech, creating sample sentences, and investigating synonyms and antonyms require students to actively digest new vocabulary. Visual components like sketching a word image help strengthen vocabulary retention. It supports a prior study (Chong Wan Ting & Li Li, K. 2019) that demonstrated children enjoyed drawing words they learned in their journals. Making their own picture instead of copying. This shows that students used the vocabulary journals and were creative by visualizing the words in context. This cognitive effort strengthens connections between new words and the learner's knowledge of words. According to (Pritchard, A. 2017; Vygotsky, 1978), learning is dynamic and interactive, and cognitive effort and social context are essential for connecting new information to existing knowledge.

Second, vocabulary journals help students understand the text specifically narrative text. Since the tools led students' in viewing activities to choose key words for narrative texts, they were encouraged to look up unusual words. Yanto, Saefullah, & Kwary (2020) found that vocabulary logs or journals can help students

understand and recall text. Students can engage deeper with the text by recording ideas as they read. Purwati (2022) also found that “this strategy encourages students to be more active and motivated in learning vocabulary, especially in reading narrative texts”. Vocabulary journals can be used with narrative text because students love to read stories. Vocabulary journals let students recognize their vocabulary growth. They understand the text better and collaborate better. This is in line with (Pritchard, A. 2017; Vygotsky, 1978), who states that social constructivism promotes learning through interactions with other students, teachers, and the world. This practice improves students' vocabulary, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. Students learn to actively develop their language and understanding the narrative texts.

Thirdly, vocabulary journals with digital narrative texts could interest students in vocabulary learning. Students could envision new words in digital texts like video. According to (Sari and Aminatun, 2021), videos are powerful educational resources that can help students learn vocabulary. Students particularly liked vocabulary journals with digital narrative text for learning general vocabulary since they offered interactive learning activities and a new classroom innovation. Overall, vocabulary journals are an effective strategy to help students learn new words because they help them understand what words mean in context, find similar and opposite words, and picture words. Using this strategy to learn new words with digital narrative text is a good way to increase students interested and involved in the learning process. By keeping vocabulary journals, students can be more involved in their own learning, get better in understanding words, and learn other useful skills. The use of this method can be an ongoing source of learning, encouraging students to continue using vocabulary journals and expanding their language knowledge.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of vocabulary journals as a strategic learning approach has the potential to greatly benefit students by enhancing their ability to acquire general vocabulary knowledge and better understand the texts they encounter. This present research study has highlighted the numerous advantages of using vocabulary journals as a valuable learning tool. By maintaining a vocabulary journal, students can expand their knowledge beyond just definitions and meanings of words. They can gather and organize a wealth of additional information related to those terms, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding. In addition, this study's findings suggested that combining vocabulary journals with interactive digital narrative texts, like videos. It can enhance the learning experience for students, making it more engaging and effective in their learning. This multimedia approach seems to greatly boost student motivation, engagement, and active participation throughout the teaching-learning process. The combination of vocabulary journals entries and visual/auditory content has proven to be highly effective for the students. This approach's emphasis on depth of learning that makes vocabulary journals an essential tool for supporting students in acquiring general

vocabulary, which improves their overall academic success and understanding of course topics.

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